The Death of Robin Hood

His pulse was faint, his eye was dim,
And pale his brow of pride;
He heeded not the monkish hymn
They chanted by his side.

He knew his parting hour was come;
And fancy wandered now
To freedom's rude and lawless home,
Beneath the forest bough.

A faithful follower, standing by,
Asked where he would be laid;
Then round the chieftain's languid eye
A lingering lustre played.

"Now raise me on my dying bed,
Bring here my trusty bow,
And ere I join the silent dead,
My arm that spot shall show."

They raised him on his couch, and set
The casement open wide;
Once more with vain and fond regret
Fair Nature's face he eyed.

With kindling glance and throbbing heart
One parting look he cast,
Sped on its way the feathered dart,
Sank back! and breathed his last!

And where it fell they dug his grave,
Beneath the greenwood tree;
Meet resting-place for one so brave,
So lawless, frank, and free.

(by Bernard Barton (Author), 1828)

'I will neuer eate nor drinke,' Robin Hood said,
'Nor meate will doo me noe good,
Till I haue beene att merry Churchlees,
My vaines far to let blood.'

'That I reade not,' said Will Scarllett,
'M*aster*, by the assente of me,
W*i*thout halfe a hundred of yo*u*r best bowmen
You take to goe with yee.

'For there a good yeoman doth abide
Will be sure to quarrell w*i*th thee,
And if thou haue need of vs, m*aster*,
In faith we will not flee.'

'And thou be feard, thou Will*iam* Scarlett,
Att home I read thee bee:'
'And you be wrothe, my deare m*aster*,
You shall neuer heare more of mee.'

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'For there shall noe man w*i*th me goe,
Nor man w*i*th mee ryde,
And Litle Iohn shall be my man,
And beare my benbow by my side.'

'You'st beare yo*u*r bowe, m*aster*, yo*u*r selfe,
And shoote for a peny w*i*th mee:'
'To that I doe assent,' Robin Hood sayd,
'And soe, Iohn, lett it bee.'

They two bolde children shotten together,
All day theire selfe in ranke,
Vntill they came to blacke water,
And over it laid a planke.

Vpon it there kneeled an old woman,
Was banning Robin Hoode;
'Why dost thou bann Ro*bin* Hood?' said Robin,

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'To giue to Robin Hoode;
Wee weepen for his deare body,
*Tha*t this day must be lett bloode.'

'The dame prior is my aunts daughter,
And nie vnto my kinne;
I know shee wold me noe harme this day,
For all the world to winne.'

Forth then shotten these children two,
And they did neuer lin,
Vntill they came to merry Churchlees,
To merry Churchlee[s] w*i*th-in.

And when they came to merry Churchlees,
They knoced vpon a pin;
Vpp then rose dame prioresse,
And lett good Robin in.

Then Robin gaue to dame prioresse
Twenty pound in gold,
And bad her spend while that wold last,
And shee shold haue more when shee wold.

And downe then came dame prioresse,
Downe she came into that ilke,
W*i*th a p*ai*r off blood-irons in her hands,
Were wrapped all in silke.

'Sett a chaffing-dish to the fyer,' s*ai*d dame prioresse,
'And stripp thou vp thy sleeue:'
I hold him but an vnwise man

*Tha*t will noe warning leeve.

Shee laid the blood-irons to Ro*bin* Hoods vaine,
Alacke, the more pitye!
And pearct the vaine, and let out the bloode,
That full red was to see.

And first it bled, the thicke, thicke bloode,
And afterwards the thinne,
And well then wist good Robin Hoode
Treason there was within.

'What cheere my m*aster*?' said Litle Iohn;
'In faith, Iohn, litle goode;'

* * * [Half page missing]* * *

'I haue upon a gowne of greene,
Is cut short by my knee,
And in my hand a bright browne brand
*Tha*t will well bite of thee.'

But forth then of a shot-windowe
Good Ro*bin* Hood he could glide;
Red Roger, w*i*th a grounden glaue,
Thrust him through the milke-white side.

But Ro*bin* was light and nimble of foote,
And thought to abate his pride,
Ffor betwixt his head and his shoulders
He made a wound full wide.

Says, Ly there, ly there, Red Roger,
The doggs they must thee eate;
'For I may haue my houzle,' he said,
'For I may both goe and speake.

'Now giue me mood,' Robin said to Litle Iohn,
'Giue me mood w*i*th thy hand;

I trust to God in heauen soe hye
My houzle will me bestand.'

'Now giue me leaue, giue me leaue, m*aster*,' he said,
'For Christs loue giue leaue to me,
To set a fier within this hall,
And to burne vp all Churchlee.'

'That I reade not,' said Ro*bin* Hoode then,
'Litle Iohn, for it may not be;
If I shold doe any widow hurt, at my latter end,
God,' he said, 'wold blame me;

'But take me vpon thy backe, Litle Iohn,
And beare me to yonder streete,
And there make me a full fayre graue,
Of grauell and of greete.

'And sett my bright sword at my head,
Mine arrowes at my feete,
And lay my vew-bow by my side,
My met-yard wi [...]

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(by Anonymous; Francis James Child (Editor), 1882-1889)

Bold Robin is at the Kirkleys
For a deed that is y-do,
And threescore and three of the king's men
Came to fetch him therefro.

"Now dup the gate," quoth the king's men,
"So quickly as ye may,
"And yield ye the traitor that liggeth here
"Or ye shall rue the day."

Then up and spoke the Abbess
That was his sister dear:
"My lords, there is never a traitor
"This day that liggeth here!"

Thereat Lord Perryn he waxed wood
And tirled the hair on his lip,
Quoth he, "Bold Robin he liggeth here,
"And hence he shall not slip!

"For we have rid fro Saint Alban's
"With letters fro the king:
"They are written with his own hand
"And sealed with his ring."

"Then," quoth the Abbess, "ye may stand without
"And tirl the hair on your chin!
"The king may bear his letters himself,
"I nill not let ye in!"

Then spoke the false Lord Newbery,
"A parlous dame, parfay!
"But an if bold Robin Hood be here,
"We will kill him this day!"

"Ye traitor, false Lord Newbery,"
Spake up the Abbess than:
"She was my mother's tiring-maid
"That was thy sire's leman!

"There nis not one false loon as ye
"In all broad England!
"An I were a man as ye're a girl
"I'd slay thee with my hand!"

"See now," quoth Lord Newbery,
"We do but parle in vain!"--
They brought an axe and a beetle,

And split the door in twain.

"Come down," then spoke Lord Perryn,
"Come down, thou bold outlaw!
"Ye shall be hanged on a tree,
"Ye have a man y-slaw!"

"Ye may not take me hence," quoth Robin,
"Ye may not do me die!--
"For this is the sanctuary
"And Saint Chad's jawbone hereby!"

"Nay then," quoth Lord Newbery,
"Sith we may not do thee die,
"Yet we'll have a basin of thy blood
"Or ever we pass hereby!"

Lord Newbery drew a bodkin
And pricked him on the arm:
I wot the traitor leugh to see
His heartis blood run warm!

"A basin, a basin hither," he said,
"To catch the blood fro the vein!
"Until the basin be full of blood
"He shall not forth again!"

He pricked a hole in the basin
That nobody should know;--
And ever bold Robin bled above,
And the blood tricked forth below.

"My sister," then quoth bold Robin,
"As thou art lief and true,
"So fetch me an arrow hither,
"Bot and my bow of yew!--

"For these bin traitors here
"That have a true man in hold!

"They are a-draining my lifeblood,
"My heart it is acold!--"

Then up and went his sister,
I wot she was not slow:
She brought to him an arrow
Bot and she brought his bow.

Bold Robin uprist fro the bed,
His cheek was white to see:--
"I will," quoth he, "where ye find this arrow,
"There ye shall bury me.

"And ye shall bear Friar Tuck on hand
"That he aye say mass for my soul,
"That Mary mother and may
"Me free fro pain and dole!"--

He took his bent bow in his hand,
And a broad arrow he let flee:
Seven furlongs he shot the arrow
Whereat it stuck in a tree.

Spoke out bold Robin than,
I wis his voice was small;
"Farewell, dear sister, Christ ye speed,
"Sith it may no better befal!

"And find ye Little John,
"And give him my bugle horn,
"For there nis never a better fellawe
"To kill the deer in the morn.

"Ye shall give my bow to Friar Tuck
"That is a bold outlaw,
"To lesen a merchant's girdle
"All in the greenwood shaw.

"And ye shall tell my merrymen all,

"Maid Marian also,
"That I am y-slaw right treacherously,
"Ne shall go forth no mo

"To slay the king's deer in the valleys
"Or rob a bishop at noon,
"Or to feast in merry Sherwood,
"For I shall die full soon.

"We were the merriest company
"Was ever in broad England,
"But Robin is slayen treacherously
"As I well understand!

"Now lay the salt on my bowel,
"And shut mine eyen tway:
"I nill no priest but Friar Tuck,
"And he is far away."

Then up and spoke Lord Perryn
And spoke unto his fere:
"Thou hast y-slaw the bravest man
"That ever brittled a deer!

"I will to the King presently
"And tell him thy treachery!
"And I will twist the willow
"To hang thee on a tree!"

They bare bold Robin fro fair Kirkleys
And laid him on a bier:
They dolve a grave beneath the arrow
And covered it with brere.

A cross y-corve above his head,
Another at his feet;
And the pricket belleth in Bernesdale,
There nis none now to shete!

Now Mary mother and sweet Saint John
Have grace on bold Robin Hood,
And keep us all fro traitors false
At home and eke abroad!--

(by Sebastian Evans (Author), 1865)